

Plan Glossary

Accessory Detached Dwelling Unit – A Dwelling Unit that is accessory, supplementary, and secondary to the Principal Dwelling that may be constructed as an addition to the principal structure or as an accessory to the Principal structures. An Accessory Dwelling Unit is detached from the Principal Dwelling Unit.

Accessory Apartment – A Dwelling Unit located within the Principal Dwelling, and that is accessory, supplementary, and secondary to the Principal Dwelling Unit. An Accessory Apartment may be constructed as an attached addition to the principal use or occupied as an accessory to the principal use. An Accessory Apartment is located within the same building as the Principal Dwelling Unit.

Accessory Use or Building – A subordinate use or building customarily incidental to and located on the same lot with the main use or building.

ADA – American with Disabilities Act.

Affordable Housing – A unit of housing which does not exceed in cost 30% of the gross household income, including utilities and maintenance, for families as defined by the U.S. Department of Housing and urban Development (HUD).

Annual Improvement Project Report – An annual report prepared by the Planning Department in coordination with the Housing and Neighborhood Action Team (HNAT) that details the capital and operating needs identified in neighborhood plans.

Art Deco – Known during the 1920's and 1930's as "style moderne" or "modernistic," buildings of the Art Deco style are often of smooth stucco with a linear, vertical emphasis and have geometric, faceted surfaces, zigzags, tile decoration, towers, and vertical projections.

Base Flood – The flood having a one percent chance of being equaled or exceeded in any given year. (i.e. 100-Year Frequency Flood)

Bungalow – Historic term popular in the early 20th century describing most any small, affordable, comfortable American suburban house.

Bungalow Style - Developed from a blend of Oriental, Arts and Crafts, and Prairie School influences, characteristics of this architectural style include low pitched roofs and wide eaves; exposed rafter ends and knee-brace eave brackets, asymmetrical facades with front porches supported by massive, battered piers, sometimes of rustic materials.

Bus Shelter – A roofed structure with at least three walls located on or adjacent to the right-of-way of a street, and which is designed and used primarily for the protection and convenience of bus passengers.

Capital Improvements Program – The list of recommended capital improvements to be constructed during the forthcoming five-year period.

Cellular on Patrol(COP) – A program that prepares neighborhood residents to be the “eyes and ears” of the police and to promote closer cooperation between residents and the city agencies that exist to serve them. Eight hours of classroom training is presented at San Antonio Police Department substations accompanied by a ride-along experience. Neighborhood groups are encouraged to form a non-profit corporation that will serve as the sponsor of that substation’s program. COP patrol members can choose a patrol format to best fit the neighborhood’s needs. Volunteers will not patrol alone, nor will they confront or chase any suspected wrongdoer.

Charrette – A brainstorming exercise that results in a quick visual presentation of the generated ideas.

City Public Service (CPS) - Purchased by the City of San Antonio in 1942, CPS is one of the nation's largest municipal utilities and serves more than 560,000 electric customers throughout its 1,566 square mile service area, and about 302,000 natural gas customers in the urban San Antonio area. Services include gas leak investigation, line locator service, voltage tests, tree trimming service, high bill investigations, residential energy efficiency survey, cooling and heating equipment sizing, gas pilot lighting, and temporary electric service, all night security light service, street lights, and “windtricity.”

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) – Federal entitlement funds that provide housing programs, streets and drainage reconstruction, parks, neighborhood facilities, and public services to directly benefit low and moderate income residents and to address deteriorated conditions in the City’s older neighborhoods. The funds are administered by the City’s Housing and Community Development Department in compliance with U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development regulatory and policy requirements.

Consolidated Plan – A five year comprehensive plan and strategy developed to assess housing, infrastructure, and social service needs that is submitted with an application for federal funds under the Housing and Urban Development’s formula grant programs.

Community Facilities – Services or conveniences provided for or available to a community. Examples include parks, libraries, fire/police stations, etc.

Community Revitalization Action Group (CRAG) – A 24 member blue-ribbon committee appointed by the City Council to identify impediments to revitalization, analyze methods for revitalization inside Loop 410, and focus on private investment and private/public partnerships. The CRAG is developing an incentive tool kit to improve revitalization efforts.

COSA – City of San Antonio.

Crosswalk – Any portion of a street at an intersection or elsewhere distinctly indicated for pedestrian crossing by lines or other markings on the street surfaces.

Demolition – The complete or partial removal of a structure from a site.

Density – An objective measurement of the number of people or residential units allowed per unit of land, such as residents or employees per acre.

Design Enhancements – Means unique artworks in a variety of media that are an integral part of eligible capital improvement projects, and produced by professional visual artists or craft persons, or an artist or craft person in collaboration with an architect, landscape architect or engineer. Works may be permanent or temporary, functional or non-functional.

Design Standards– Design standards are intended to provide a framework of design criteria within which physical planning can take place. The standards provide suggestions for the design of new homes/businesses and repair/rehabilitation of existing homes/businesses in order to maintain the overall character of the neighborhood. Generally, character-defining elements such as front porches, roof slopes, etc. are emphasized in residential guidelines while setbacks, canopies and signage may be emphasized in commercial guidelines.

Downzoning – The reduction of the intensity of a zoning district through a formal zone change process.

Dwelling Unit – One or more rooms providing complete living facilities for one family, including kitchen facilities or equipment for cooking or provisions for the same, and including room or rooms for living, sleeping, bathing and eating.

Economic Base – The foundation on which a neighborhood relies for economic sustainability.

Economic Development – To improve the functioning of economic markets and to equip current residents with the skills and resources to enable them to take advantage of the new market opportunities.

Façade – The exterior wall of a building exposed to public view.

FHWA – Federal Highway Administration.

Flood Hazard Boundary Map – An official map of a community, issued by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, where the areas within the boundaries of special flood hazards have been designated as Zone A.

Floodplain – All area of special flood hazard within the jurisdiction of the City of San Antonio and where applicable in its area of extraterritorial jurisdiction.

Four Square – A type of 1- or 2-story American house popular from 1910 – 1940, characterized by a pyramidal roof, central front dormer and symmetrical façade. The name reflects a square plan with four rooms per floor, sometimes divided by a central hall.

Gateway – A physical threshold that marks one's arrival or departure.

Goal – An ideal future end, condition or state related to the public health, safety or general welfare toward which planning and planning implementation measures are directed.

Hazard Elimination Safety Program (HESP) – Each fiscal year 10% of the Surface Transportation Program funds apportioned to a state must be used for hazard elimination activities or rail-highway crossing activities. Funding for HESP activities may be used on any public road. The program is competitive and is administered by the Texas Department of Transportation.

Heritage Tree – A tree, or any species, having a trunk size of thirty (30 inches) DBH or larger.

Historic Tax Credits – Ad Valorem tax (property tax) exemption is available to City of San Antonio home and commercial property owners who substantially restore or renovate their historic properties. If a commercial property is listed on the National Register of Historic Properties or a contributing structure in a National Register Historic District, commercial property owners may be eligible for a federal income tax credit for completing a restoration or renovation of the historic property.

Home Investment Partnerships Program (HUD-HOME) – Grants administered by local governments to expand the supply of affordable housing, such as rehabilitation and construction of housing, rental assistance, and homebuyer assistance.

Homestead Exemption – A general residential exemption by the Bexar Appraisal District if the subject property is the applicant's residence homestead, and a residence homestead exemption is not being claimed on any other property. To qualify for the exemption, an applicant must own and reside in his or her home on January 1 of the tax year. Applicants may also receive the Over-65 Homestead Exemption, the Over-55 Surviving Spouse of a Person who Received the Over-65 Exemption, or the Disability Exemption upon qualifying for the homestead exemption, if eligible.

Indicator – A way to measure the impact of local actions to determine the progress of a neighborhood or community plan.

Infill – The development and reuse of underutilized parcels.

Infill Housing – New housing constructed on vacant lots in an area that is predominantly developed. The new housing can include: single-family, duplexes, townhouses, apartments, senior housing, etc.

Infrastructure – Facilities and services needed to sustain any type of development – residential, commercial or industrial activities. Includes water and sewer lines, streets, electrical power, fire and police stations.

Land Use – The manner in which land is used. For example, low-density residential land uses primarily include single-family houses.

Land Use Plan – A plan that graphically depicts existing and future land uses and intensities. It visually discerns land use compatibility and spatial relationships, establishes the physical form of the community and identifies urban design opportunities. A land use plan serves as a guide in the preparation of zoning ordinances and zoning district maps.

Landscaping Ordinance – Implemented in 1997, the primary purpose of the City's Landscaping Ordinance is to create commercial land uses that not only are attractive but also add value to the property. Landscaping includes preservation of existing trees, understory plants, and natural areas in addition to installing new trees and plants.

Linear Parks– Provides a physical link between two or more areas. Linear park trails can accommodate bicycling, hiking, jogging, and walking. The width of a linear park system is important because the amount of land included in the corridor is intended to reflect a park-like environment.

Live/Work Units – Living units that are zoned to allow small businesses to operate from a portion of the structure, generally identified by small retail or service oriented businesses or artist studios.

Major Thoroughfare Plan – That part of the master plan designating the location, dimensions, and dedication requirements of expressways, primary arterials and secondary arterials.

Mass Transit – The transportation of passengers and hand-carried packages or baggage of a passenger by a surface, overhead, or underground means of transportation, or a combination of those means, including motor bus, trolley coach, rail, and suspended overhead rail transportation.

Master Plan – The City's Master Plan Policies were adopted May 1997. The Master Plan Policies are intended to provide guidance in the evaluation of future decisions on land use, infrastructure improvements, transportation, and other issues, and ordinances that are proposed and considered after the adoption of the Master Plan Policies. It should be consistent with the relevant goals and policies contained in the Plan. The primary objectives of master plans are to coordinate public and private investment; minimize conflict between land uses; influence and manage the development of the community; increase both the benefits and cost effectiveness of public investment; predict infrastructure and service needs in advance of demand; and ensure that community facilities are located to best serve the community.

Mediterranean – An architectural style influenced by designs in the various European countries bordering the Mediterranean Sea, usually resulting in buildings with exterior walls of stucco and low pitched tile roofs.

Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) – A 20- to 25-year master plan that identifies the existing and future land use trends and transportation needs, develops coordinated strategies to provide necessary transportation facilities, and assures the continuation of federal transportation funds for the San Antonio area. The MTP is administered by the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), a policy committee of public officials that reviews and makes decisions regarding the transportation planning effort.

Minimal Traditional – Popular between 1935 and 1950 and constructed of wood, brick, stone or a mixture of these materials, these homes generally were small, one-story, and devoid of decorative detailing. They had low roof pitches and close eaves.

Mission Revival – An architectural style beginning in the late 19th century influenced by Spanish missions of the U.S. Southwest, and characterized by curvilinear parapets, stucco walls with occasional ornamentation and bell towers.

Mixed Use District – A zoning district that provides concentrated residential, retail, service, office and mixed uses to be established subject to design standards.

Municipal Management District – A defined geographic area that established a separate taxing entity to provide funds for improvements within that area. Examples are TIFs (Tax Increment Financing districts) and PIDs (Public Improvement Districts).

Neighborhood Commercial Revitalization (NCR) – A city program that provides financial support to revitalize older commercial districts to create jobs, economic opportunity and a better quality of life in older neighborhoods.

Neighborhood Conservation District (NCD) – A Zoning Overlay (a specific geographic area identified as an “overlay” to the base zoning, but does not change the zoning designation use) that includes the application of neighborhood based design standards, individually tailored to address specific redevelopment issues.

Neighborhood Planning Process – A procedure by which neighborhood residents and property owners can develop neighborhood plans suitable for recognition by the Planning Commission and City Council.

Neighborhood Unit – A neighborhood unit encompasses an area that includes residences, businesses, parks, schools, and other community facilities. Populations may range from 4,000 to 10,000 people depending on the geographic area and boundaries. A neighborhood unit usually contains at least 1,500 housing units.

Node – A center of activity or development, often located at a major intersection.

Nonconforming Use - Generally, the use of an existing property or structure that does not comply with the use regulations applicable to the zoning district in which the property is located.

Objective – A specific end, condition, or state that is an intermediate step toward attaining a goal. An objectives should be achievable and when possible measurable and time specific.

Overlay Zoning – A zoning classification which defines an addition set of requirements over and above the base zoning requirements to be applied to a site in combination with a base zoning.

Planning Commission / City Council Recognition – The Planning Commission reviews community and neighborhood plans to ensure the document is inclusive, consistent with city policies and an accurate reflection of the community's values. After Planning Commission recognition, the plan is forwarded to City Council for adoption as a component of the City's Comprehensive Master Plan. An approved plan is used by city departments, boards and commissions as a guide for decision-making.

Prairie Style - An early 20th century architectural style made popular through the publication of Frank Lloyd Wright's designs that exhibits a horizontal emphasis through deep roof overhangs and broad porches.

Preservation – Retaining the historic appearance of a property through continued maintenance and use.

Principal Dwelling – A Dwelling Unit which constitutes the principal building or principal structure on a lot or parcel, in which the principal use is conducted.

Public Improvement District – See Municipal Management District.

Ranch - Originating in the mid 1930's by California architects, "rambling" ranch homes emphasized a maximum façade width that was characterized by low-pitched roofs with a wide eave overhang, and often with exposed rafters. A large picture window in the living area and a private outdoor patio at the rear of the home were a direct contrast with early 20th century styles.

Rehabilitation – A project that combines preservation, restoration, and adaptive use, generally to allow a property to retain its historic integrity while meeting modern requirements.

Restoration – The return of a property (or an element such as the exterior or interior) to its appearance at a particular time during its history.

Revitalization – A coordinated program to capitalize on inner city assets such as commercial and residential buildings, an untapped workforce, and proximity to downtown to ensure the sustainability of the urban core.

SAFFE – San Antonio Fear Free Environment is a community policing program that consists of officers who focus on identifying, evaluating and resolving community crime problems with the cooperation and participation of community residents. SAFFE officers are assigned to specific areas within the city, and work closely with both residents and the district patrol officers assigned to those areas.

San Antonio Water System (SAWS) - A public utility which is owned by the City of San Antonio, SAWS was created in May 1992 through the consolidation of three predecessor agencies: the City Water Board (the previous city-owned water supply utility); the City Wastewater Department (a department of the city government responsible for sewage collection and treatment); and the Alamo Water Conservation and Reuse District (an independent city agency created to develop a system for reuse of the city's treated wastewater). SAWS is responsible for complying with federal permit requirements for treatment of the city's storm water runoff. An important component of SAWS planning role is the responsibility to protect the purity of the city's water supply from the Edwards Aquifer, including enforcing certain city ordinances related to subdivision development. SAWS offers a number of programs designed to help customers with their bills. *Plumbers to People* is service that provides free plumbing repairs to low-income SAWS customers. *Project Agua* provides emergency bill assistance for low-income customers behind in their payments. SAWS Customer Service employees also work with customers each day to arrange payment plans to help with temporary financial hardships. The City of San Antonio qualifies customers for assistance in both *Plumbers to People* and *Project Agua*.

Section 8 Housing Assistance (HUD-8) – A rent subsidies program administered by local governments to eligible tenants – low (50 percent of median) income, elderly, disabled and handicapped tenants.

Sign, billboard (off-premise) – Any outdoor sign, description, device, figure, painting, drawing, message, placard, poster, structure or thing which directs the attention of the travelling public to a business, commercial product, commercial activity, or commercial service, conducted, sold or offered at a location other than the premises on which the sign is located.

Sign Ordinance – Rules and regulations that govern the posting of signs in a city.

Statewide Transportation Enhancement Program (STEP) – A reimbursement program funded through the Surface Transportation Program, and administered by the Texas Department of Transportation for the Federal Highway Administration of the U.S. Department of Transportation, transportation enhancement projects must establish a relationship to the surface transportation system. Eligible projects may include pedestrian and bicycle facilities, safety and

education activities for pedestrians and bicyclists, acquisition of scenic easements and scenic or historic sites, scenic or historic highway programs including tourist and welcome center facilities, landscaping and other scenic beautification, historic preservation, rehabilitation and operation of historic transportation facilities, preservation of abandoned railway corridors, including conversion and use for pedestrian and bicycle trails, archaeological planning and research, environmental mitigation, and transportation museums. A 20% local match is required.

Strategic Planning - A methodology that focuses on specific issues and action plans toward implementation.

Street, Arterial – A street used primarily for fast or heavy traffic and designated in the major thoroughfare plan as a primary arterial street, secondary arterial street or express way.

Street, Collector – A street used to provide some access to abutting property, collect traffic from local streets, and connect with the major system of arterial streets and highways.

Street, Local – A street designed to provide vehicular access to abutting property and to discourage through traffic.

Street Tree – A tree planted along a street or roadway behind the right-of-way line or between a sidewalk and the edge of the paved surface of the roadway.

Streetscape – A design term referring to all the elements that constitute the physical makeup of a street and that, as a group, define its character, including building frontage, street paving, street furniture, landscaping, awnings, marquees, signs, and lighting.

TEA-21 – The Transportation Efficiency Act for the 21st Century.

Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) – A statewide assessment program that measures the statewide curriculum in reading and mathematics at grades 3 through 8 and the exit level; in writing at grades 4, 8 and the exit level; and in science and social studies at grade 8. Spanish-version TAAS tests are administered at grades 3 through 6. Satisfactory performance on the TAAS exit level tests is prerequisite to a high school diploma.

Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) – A type of development that combines a variety of housing types with commercial and civic uses in a compact, walkable neighborhood setting. TNDs feature a highly interconnected street network and setbacks appropriate to create a public realm built on a human scale.

Traffic Calming – A method to slow vehicles on streets where drivers travel at higher speeds than is desirable. Traffic calming tools range from bulbouts (curb extensions), chicanes (a series of bulbouts), chokers, diverters, full and partial street closures, gateways, intersection median barriers, landscaping treatments, medians, T intersections, pedestrian refuge islands, speed humps and tables, raised intersections, reducing number of lanes, roadway narrowing, roundabouts, signage (adding or modifying), signal enhancements, and traffic circles.

Transportation Improvement Plan – A short-range, three-year programming document that allocates funding for all transportation projects and activities in the area. The TIP must include all roadway and transit projects that are to receive federal funds. The TIP is reviewed and approved by the Metropolitan Planning Organization.

TxDOT – Texas Department of Transportation.

Urban Design – A process to creatively shape the City's physical form, image or identity that incorporates broad community and professional involvement to visually improve the character of the City at a scale and level ranging from streetscapes, to individual buildings, to neighborhoods and to the City as a whole.

Use – The purpose for which land or structures thereon is designated, arranged, or intended to be occupied or used, or for which it is occupied, maintained, rented, or leased.

Utility Conversion District – A zoning overlay district that identifies and designates specific urban corridors to require the various utility companies to implement projects as part of public works or civic improvement projects and to require property owners and utility customers to modify their property as necessary to receive utility services from underground, relocated or redesigned distribution systems.

Variance - Any of the following: 1) A request to the planning commission for permission to vary or depart from a requirement of the Unified Development Code where, due to special conditions, a literal enforcement of the requirement will result in an unnecessary hardship. 2) A request to the board of adjustment for permission to vary or depart from a requirement of the Unified Development Code due to special conditions, a literal enforcement of the requirement will result in an unnecessary hardship.

Vegetative Buffer Yard – A unit of yard together with the required installation of landscaping and screening materials to minimize potential negative impacts such as dirt, litter, noise, glare of lights, signs and unsightly buildings between different land use intensity classes.

VIA Metropolitan Transit - VIA Metropolitan Transit has been in operation since 1978 when it took over public transit operations from the City of San Antonio. Today, VIA serves over 1,200 square miles of Bexar County, including San Antonio, 17 additional area municipalities, and unincorporated areas of the County. VIA operates 106 bus lines, serving an area of 1,233.78 square miles or 99% of Bexar County. Bus lines are divided into six categories: radial, limited stop, express, crosstown, circulator, and streetcar. VIA Metropolitan Transit provides a variety of travel options and programs for its customers who have disabilities. Customers who are unable to use the fixed-route bus system because of a disability can be certified to use VIAtrans, VIA's ADA paratransit service. Mobility-impaired customers who can use the fixed-route bus system have access to lift-equipped buses as well as low-floor buses.

Viewshed - Any area of open sky or view behind: 1) the major entrance to a designated historic landmark building, object, site or structure; 2) the primary access point or points to a designated historic district, 3) the primary access to a major tourist attraction or amusement park, or 4) the primary view or access point to the San Antonio River Walk, a city lake or amusement park that has been defined as a viewshed in the Unified Development Code. An overlay zoning district may be established for viewshed protection.

Vista – A view through or along an avenue or opening, including those along the banks of the San Antonio River, which, as a view corridor, frames highlights or accentuates a prominent building, object, site structure, scene, or panorama, or patterns of rhythms of buildings, objects, sites, or structures, to include views of areas at a distance, such as a remote view of the downtown or the San Antonio River.

Zoning – Regulates density and land use. Zoning is a key tool for carrying out planning policy, and is articulated by a base zoning district map adopted by City Council that designates zoning districts.

Zoning Ordinance – Rules and regulations that govern the way land is zoned (separated according to land uses) in a city that are described in the Unified Development Code.